

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 AGR-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 EB-07 FRB-03 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 LAB-04

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 AID-05 CIEP-01 SS-15 STR-04

TAR-01 TRSE-00 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 FEAE-00 OMB-01

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R 091219Z OCT 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9725

INFO ALL EC CAPITALS 1178

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, EEC, IR

SUBJECT: EC/IRAN PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENT

REF: A. EC BRUSSELS 8804 B. BONN 16477 C. ROME 14224

1. IN A MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR GREENWALD ON OCTOBER 7, SOAMES AGAIN BROUGHT UP THE PROBLEM OF EC/IRAN TRADE RELATIONS. HE SAID THE IRANIANS ARE STILL PRESSING VERY HARD FOR A PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENT. HE HAD JUST RECEIVED A CALL FROM THE IRANIAN FINANCE MINISTER RENEWING THE DEMAND FOR PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT.

2. SOAMES CLAIMED THE UK IS THE ONLY MEMBER STATE STANDING FIRM IN OPPOSING THE EXTENSION OF SPECIAL PREFERENCES TO IRAN. ACCORDING TO SOAMES, ALL THE OTHER MEMBER STATES MAKE AFFIRMATIVE NOISES WHENEVER THE IRANIANS ASK FOR SUPPORT. SOAMES IS STILL OPPOSED TO A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT FOR IRAN, BUT HE IS NOT SURE THAT HE CAN CONTINUE TO HOLD OUT AGAINST CONTINUED IRANIAN PRESSURE WHEN THIS IS BUTTRESSED BY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AT LEAST TACIT MEMBER-STATE SUPPORT FOR A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT.

3. COMMENT: THOUGH SOAMES DID NOT GO THROUGH ALL THE ARGUEMENTS AGAIN, HE CLEARLY FEELS THAT A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT FOR IRAN CAN BE AVOIDED ONLY IF HE GETS MORE SUPPORT THAN AT PRESENT. IF THE INTERESTED PARTIES DO NOT TAKE A STRONGER LINE AND THE REMAINING OPPOSITION TO A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT COLLAPSES, SUBSEQUENT US PROTESTS MAKING IT A MAJOR ISSUE OF PRINCIPLE WILL NOT FIND A VERY SYMPATHETIC AUDIENCE IN SOAMES OR IN THE COMMISSION. BY THAT TIME THE BATTLE WILL HAVE BEEN LOST AND WE WILL BE LEFT WITH ANOTHER CONTENTIOUS ISSUE ADDED TO THE USXEC DOCKET. SOAMES THINKS THAT IF THE UNITED STATES STILL CONSIDERS THIS AN IMPORTANT ISSUE WE SHOULD GIVE HIM THE NECESSARY HELP IN EC-9 CAPITALS AND TEHRAN EVEN THOUGH IT INVOLVES A FOREIGN POLICY BURDEN FOR THE UNITED STATES. IF WE BELIEVE THAT THE EFFORT IS NOT JUSTIFIED OR IS UNNECESSARY, THEN WE MUST BE PREPARED TO RUN THE RISK OF AN EXTENSION OF THE COMMUNITY'S PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS (DESPITE THE CASEY-SOAMES UNDERSTANDING). IN SOAMES' VIEW, A DECISION DOWNGRADING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE IRANIAN PREFERENCE PROBLEM WOULD FORECLOSE THE US FROM COMPLAINING BILATERALLY OR MULTILATERALLY. GREENWALD

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